

482. Moslem rules of propriety. To a great extent the legislation of Mohammed consisted in accomplishing reforms and innovations for which the Arabs were almost ready. When he tried to introduce ideas of his own, changing the mores, he failed. He tried many times to put a stop to the usages of mourning which were violent and excessive,—loud outcries, destruction of clothes and furniture, blackening the walls of the house and one's face, and shearing the beard. He did not succeed. These were ancient and popular customs and they were maintained.¹ It is improper for any Moslem, male or female, to uncover the head.² They uncover the feet to show respect. This was Semitic and is Oriental.³ Robertson Smith⁴ thinks that the reason was that the shoes could not be washed, unless they were mere linen socks, such as were used in the Phoenician sacred dress. By Moslem rules strangers should never see or hear a man's wives. Physicians may see only the affected parts of a woman. A traveler returning home may not enter his own house at night. Two persons of the same sex must never bare the body between the waist and the knee in presence of each other. The Koran⁶ contains elaborate rules for women as to the concealment of parts of the body, and as to movements of the body and gestures as limited by propriety. Neatness, care, and order are religious duties; also devices to preserve and enhance beauty.⁶ To an Arab, a blow on the back of the neck is more insulting than one on the face.⁷ It is not proper for a man to look at any Moslem woman in the face. When Vambéry, talking to a lady, raised his eyes to her face she sternly told him to behave with propriety.⁸

483. Hatless women. In contrast with the Moslem rule not to uncover the head is the Christian rule that men should uncover the head in church but that women should cover it. In 1905 Cranstock church in Newquay, Cornwall, England, was closed on account of the "irreverence of numbers of women,

¹ Von Kremer, *Kulturgesck. des Orients*, II, 250.

² *Ibid.*, 215.

5 Sura XXIV.

³ Exod. iii. 5 ; Josh. v. 15.

⁶ Tornauw, *Mosl. Recht.*, 86.

* *jRelig. of the Semites*, 453.

⁷ Burckhardt, *Arabic*

Proverbs^I.

⁸ *SittenUlder aus dem Morgenlande*, 16.